Memorable Milestones

A Photo Essay

by **Kelly Rohder**

It's probable that college founders J. Stanley Brown and William Rainey Harper could not have fathomed that their experimental postgraduate high school program, which served six students when it began in 1901, would evolve into a multi-campus institution serving upwards of 40,000 students a year over 100 years later.

Yet it's inevitable that JJC, the nation's first public community college, would amass a notable collection of milestones along the way. There was the move in 1969 from the college's original location within Joliet Township High School to farmland off of Houbolt Road in the western Will County. From there, new buildings, including athletic facilities, a fine arts theatre, classrooms, and satellite locations took shape. New academic programs, like the orthotics and prosthetics program that you'll read about in this magazine, were developed to meet labor market demands.

It may seem in recent years that the college has been transforming at a more rapid rate—a look through the last four years of this publication will attest. This is particularly evident through the implementation of the college's 2008-2013 master plan, which has executed a head-spinning six major projects, including the Greenhouse Facility, Campus Center, Facility Service Building, Automotive Technology Expansion, Natural Sciences Expansion, and Health Professions Building. In the last four years, the college's physical space has grown over 300,000 square feet to meet growing demand for training and education.

It is impossible to detail in these pages each milestone the college has achieved since 1901, or even in the last 40 years since the cultivation of the college's own campus and district. But what we can do is acknowledge our past, and its importance in guiding us in the present and through our future. The following photo essay shares a glimpse into what made the college what it is today, and the agents of change that propelled it. These images are a testament to the unique character of Joliet Junior College, and its commitment to teaching, learning, and the community it serves.

A very special thank you to the JJC Library and the Media Services Department for their collaborative efforts and for providing photos and information for this essay.

Where it all began--Joliet Junior College's original location, within Joliet Township High School off of Eastern Avenue in downtown Joliet. This photo was taken in 1924.

The JJC College Club, 1928. This club served as a student council until the late 1940s when it officially became known as the JJC Student Council.

Joliet Junior College classroom circa 1925.

Milestones & Highlights

1901

JJC was established by J. Stanley Brown and Dr. William Rainey Harper at Joliet Township High School

1916

Joliet Junior College was officially named

1917

JJC became accredited by the North Central Association

1918

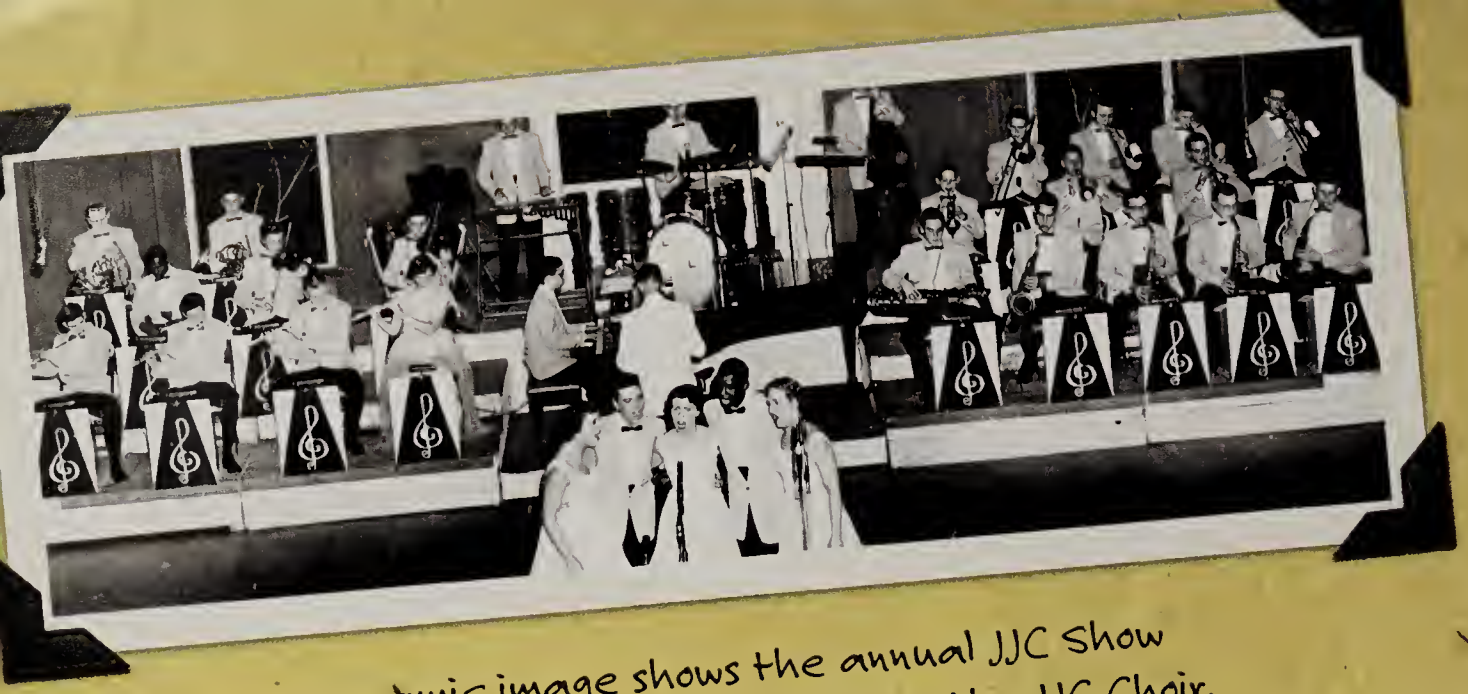
First official JJC graduation ceremony held

1928

First student council was created

1938

The college library holdings included 8,776 bound volumes and 1,572 pamphlets



This panoramic image shows the annual JJC Show in May 1958. The JJC Show comprised the JJC Choir, Swing Band, Dance Troupe, JJC Players (theatre group) and selected student performers. The theme of this show was 'Panorama in Swing.'

Perhaps you've seen culinary students outside the J-Building on the Main Campus perfecting their craft, but in the early 1970s, before that campus was constructed, the college community was clustered into 17 temporary buildings like the one seen in the background here.

Student Council, 1949.

George H.W. Bush stopped at JJC while on the campaign trail in the 1980s and chatted with Trustee Charles Kennedy and JJC President Derek Nunney.

Many of the college's career and technical education curricula were developed in the 1950s, including the automotive technology program in 1951.

1943

Two new curricula were introduced, merchandising and secretarial training, developed to meet labor market demands

1951

Expansion of Adult Education and new academic programs: agriculture, music, automotivetechnology and pre-nursing

1964

New program added to help non-English speaking students to student development services

1966

The college's annual report detailed rapidly growing enrollments, from 1,043 full-time students in 1960-61 to 2,341 in 1965-66

1967

Junior colleges were officially recognized with the passage of the Master Plan for Higher Education in Illinois in 1965. JJC's District 525 is created

A popular student activity in the 1970s was the tricycle races held around the quad created by the temporary buildings.

The D-Building's first incarnation. Many students in 1970s and 1980s referred to this lounge as "Seal Island."

JJC Today

Celebrating our History
Founded in 1901, JJC is the nation's first public community college and is a leader in post-secondary education. More than 40,000 people proudly call themselves alumni of JJC.

Changing our Lives
Annually, more than 45,000 people change their lives through degree or certificate programs, training, and lifelong learning courses at Joliet Junior College.

Honoring our Veterans
More than 40,000 veterans in the JJC district, the college's Veterans Affairs Office offers customized support services, including assistance with applying for and using the education benefits.

Supporting our Seniors
The college's Plus 50 Workforce Center, funded by federal grants, provides innovative retraining and workforce skills opportunities for students 50 and over.

Revitalizing our Health Care
Joliet Junior College graduates make significant contributions to area health care institutions. In the past five years, more than 1,500 health care professionals have graduated from JJC.

Strengthening our Workforce
Nearly 75% of area employers hired a JJC student at some point over the last ten years.

Sustaining our Small Businesses
In the past year, the college has provided valuable training and development seminars to nearly 900 small businesses, companies and organizations in northern Illinois.

Building our Future
It is estimated that the current Facilities Master Plan (2008-2013) will generate 8,000 new jobs in the district through the direct and indirect impacts of construction.

The college's Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness provided this data. Complete reports are available online at: www.jjc.edu/about/college-info/institutional-research

1968
The site for the new JJC campus is selected in February; in March, a bond referendum is approved

1969
Board voted to move to interim main campus and classes were held in 17 temporary buildings

1970
First Alumni association organized

1972
Phase 1 of main campus completed

1974
Phase 2 of main campus completed

1975
JJC Foundation organized

2008
$89 million referendum voter referendum passed construction begins on new master plan